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AMENDMENTS TO THE SPECIFICATION

Please amend the first paragraph of the specification, page 1, lines 4-8, as follows:

CROSS REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATIONS

This application is based upon and claims the benefit of priority from the prior Japanese Patent Application No. P2002-267300, filed on September 12, 2002; ~~the entire contents of which are incorporated herein by reference.~~

Please amend the last paragraph beginning on page 5, line 18 and ending on page 6, line 5, as follows:

Further, the plate main body 3 is structured, as shown in Fig. 2, such that the upper and lower lines AB and C'D' of the plate main body 3 are approximately in parallel to the upper and lower end plates 5U and 5L of the vertebra body 5, and the corner portion C' ~~corresponding~~ corresponds to a pedicle arch vertebra 5A of the vertebra. The corner portion C' has a shape provided with the protruding portion 11 protruding to a side of the pedicle of arch of the vertebra 5A and an approximately point symmetrical shape around the intersection point O. Further, as shown in Fig. 3, the plate main body 3 is formed in a slightly curved manner so as to correspond to a peripheral surface of the vertebra body 5. In this case, the structure of the plate 3 may be obtained by deforming the point symmetrical shape within the allowable range.

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Please amend the first full paragraph beginning on page 6, line 6 as follows:

Figs. 5A and 5B show a vertebra body plate 1A having a ~~symmetrical shape with the same shape as~~ vertebra body plate 1. A shape thereof is symmetrical with that of the first embodiment, and the other structures are the same as those of the first embodiment mentioned above. Accordingly, the same reference numerals are attached to the constituting portions achieving the same functions, and a detailed description thereof will be omitted.

Please amend the specification beginning on page 6, line 23 and ending on page 7, line 24, as follows:

Since the shape of the vertebra body 5 constituting the vertebral column has an individual difference, the vertebra body plate 1A is selected in correspondence to the shape of the individual vertebra body. Further, when placing the vertebra body plate 4 ~~(4A)~~ embodiments 1 and 1A in the vertebra body 5, the shape of the vertebra body plate 1 is deformed so as to approximately correspond to the surface shape of the vertebra body to be placed.

The vertebra body plate 4 ~~(4A)~~ embodiments 1 and 1A can be deformed in its shape in correspondence to the curvature of the vertebra body by bending the protruding portions 11, 11 around the center O, and a contact area between the vertebra body plate 4 ~~(4A)~~ embodiments 1 and 1A and the vertebra body is larger than the conventional one.

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Accordingly, since the contact area is large in the case that a plurality of spikes 7 provided in the vertebra body plate ~~4-(1A)~~ embodiments 1 and 1A are stuck to the vertebra body 5 so as to be fixed, it is possible to more securely fix the vertebra body plate ~~4-(1A)~~ embodiments 1 and 1A to the vertebra body 5.

After respectively fixing the vertebra body plates ~~4-(1A)~~ embodiments 1 and 1A to the separated vertebra bodies 5 in the manner mentioned above, the screw (not shown) is screwed into each of the vertebra bodies 5 through the screw insertion hole 9 provided in each of the vertebra body plate ~~4-(1A)~~, embodiments 1 and 1A and the portion near the end portion of the rod for connecting the vertebra body is supported and fixed by the rod engagement portion provided in the head portion of the screw, whereby the separated vertebra bodies 5 are connected, and the vertebral column can be fixed.